



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Fire Island
National Seashore

120 Laurel Street
Patchogue, NY 11772

631 289-4810 phone
631 289-4898 fax

Fire Island National Seashore News Release

Release date: Immediate

Contact(s): Paula Valentine, Public Affairs

Phone number: 631- 687- 4759

Date: December 11, 2007

Release code: 07- 25

“Holiday in the National Parks” Celebrated at the White House Fire Island National Seashore Ornament Displayed on the Official White House Christmas Tree

Patchogue, N.Y.— A handmade ornament representing the diverse features and assets of Fire Island National Seashore is prominently displayed on this year’s official White House Christmas Tree. The tree is the centerpiece of elaborate decorations celebrating the theme of “Holiday in the National Parks.”

“It is an amazing honor for the National Park Service to be selected as the theme for the White House holiday decorations by the President and Mrs. Bush,” said National Park Service Director Mary A. Bomar. “Mrs. Bush is the best champion for our national parks, and the beautiful decorations in each state room showcase the natural and historical treasures found in parks throughout the country.”

The tree, located in the Blue Room, is adorned with handmade ornaments representing the country’s 391 National Park Service sites. “Each ornament on the magnificent 18- foot Fraser fir was designed by an artist selected by the park,” said Bomar. “The ornaments tell the stories of our parks, just as our parks tell the stories of our nation.”

Fire Island National Seashore’s ornament was painted by park interpreter Kristin Santos. Kristin, who grew up spending her summers on Fire Island, has worked for the Seashore since 1993: first as a Youth Conservation Corps (YCC) participant, then as a campground ranger in 1994, and as a seasonal interpreter from 1994 to 2004. Since the summer of 2004, when she was hired as a permanent park ranger specializing in interpretive media, Kristin has been using her artistic skills and talent to design and create publications, bulletin boards, exhibits, and material for the park’s website.

(more)

EXPERIENCE YOUR AMERICA™

The National Park Service cares for special places saved by the American people so that all may experience our heritage.



White House photo

Fire Island National Seashore's White House ornament depicts the cultural features of the park—the Fire Island Lighthouse and the William Floyd Estate—and some of the Seashore's natural and recreational resources.

Kristin fashioned the White House ornament around a design she had created for the park's new Junior Ranger patch, highlighting Fire Island National Seashore's natural and historic features, including the Fire Island Lighthouse and the William Floyd Estate, and the recreational opportunities available at park. In addition, she painted the park's logo on the base of the ornament.

Kristin also attended the White House reception hosted by First Lady Laura Bush on November 28. "It was exhilarating to be among so many talented artists who truly love and appreciate their local National Park Service sites," stated Santos.

Park Superintendent Michael Reynolds shared his enthusiasm for the project. "During the first year of the National Park Service's Centennial Initiative," said Reynolds, "this is a great way to introduce people to the variety of special places that are cared for by the National Park Service. Many people are perhaps unaware that there is a national park in their own back yard." Located on the south shore, Fire Island National Seashore is one of three NPS areas on Long Island, joined by Sagamore Hill National Historic Site on the north shore in Oyster Bay, and portions of Gateway National Recreation Area in Brooklyn and Queens.

The White House holiday displays incorporate the wide variety of natural, cultural, and recreational features preserved by the National Park Service. Models of icons such as the Cape Hatteras Lighthouse and the Statue of Liberty share space with paintings of scenic vistas from Grand Canyon, Zion, and Rocky Mountain national parks. Holiday garlands intertwined with park objects including seashells, pine cones, and gold aspen leaves add to each room's festive feel.

A highlight of the decorations is a scaled-down, but architecturally accurate, gingerbread reproduction of the south view of the White House, a unit of the National Park Service. The edible masterpiece includes Bush family pets Barney, Miss Beazley, and Willie frolicking on the lawn with moose, elk, raccoons, and other animals found in national parks.

"National parks commemorate the people, places, and events that define the American experience," said Secretary of the Interior Dirk Kempthorne. "I am so appreciative of President Bush's efforts to recognize the important role of national parks in American society. Our country will celebrate the 100th anniversary of the National Park Service in 2016 and the President has been instrumental in establishing the National Park Centennial Initiative to prepare the parks for the next century."

For more information, see www.whitehouse.gov/holiday/2007/. To learn more about Fire Island National Seashore, visit www.nps.gov/fiis.

###